

Marshall, Texas: The Birthplace of Boogie Woogie



# **Boogie Woogie 101**


**How the music that started in  
Marshall became popular  
throughout the world.**



*Dr. Tennison in Switzerland with Axel Zwingenberger, considered to be the most influential and prolific of the European composers, performers and scholars of Boogie Woogie.*

**Dr. John Tennison (*left*) is a San Antonio psychiatrist and internationally respected musicologist & Boogie Woogie expert. After years researching the origins of this influential & revolutionary style, Dr. Tennison determined that Marshall, Texas is the most likely original hub from which Boogie Woogie music spread to the rest of the world.**





**In the 1930s, musicologists determined that Boogie Woogie music originated in the early 1870s somewhere in the Piney Woods of Northeast Texas.**

**In 2006, Dr. John Tennison began research to determine a more specific location...**





**Dr. Tennison's research concluded that the following elements were crucial to determining where Boogie Woogie music originated.**



**•A population of newly-freed African Americans.**



**•Close proximity to railroad hub & railroad activities.**



**•Surrounded by logging camps in the Piney Woods of northeast Texas.**

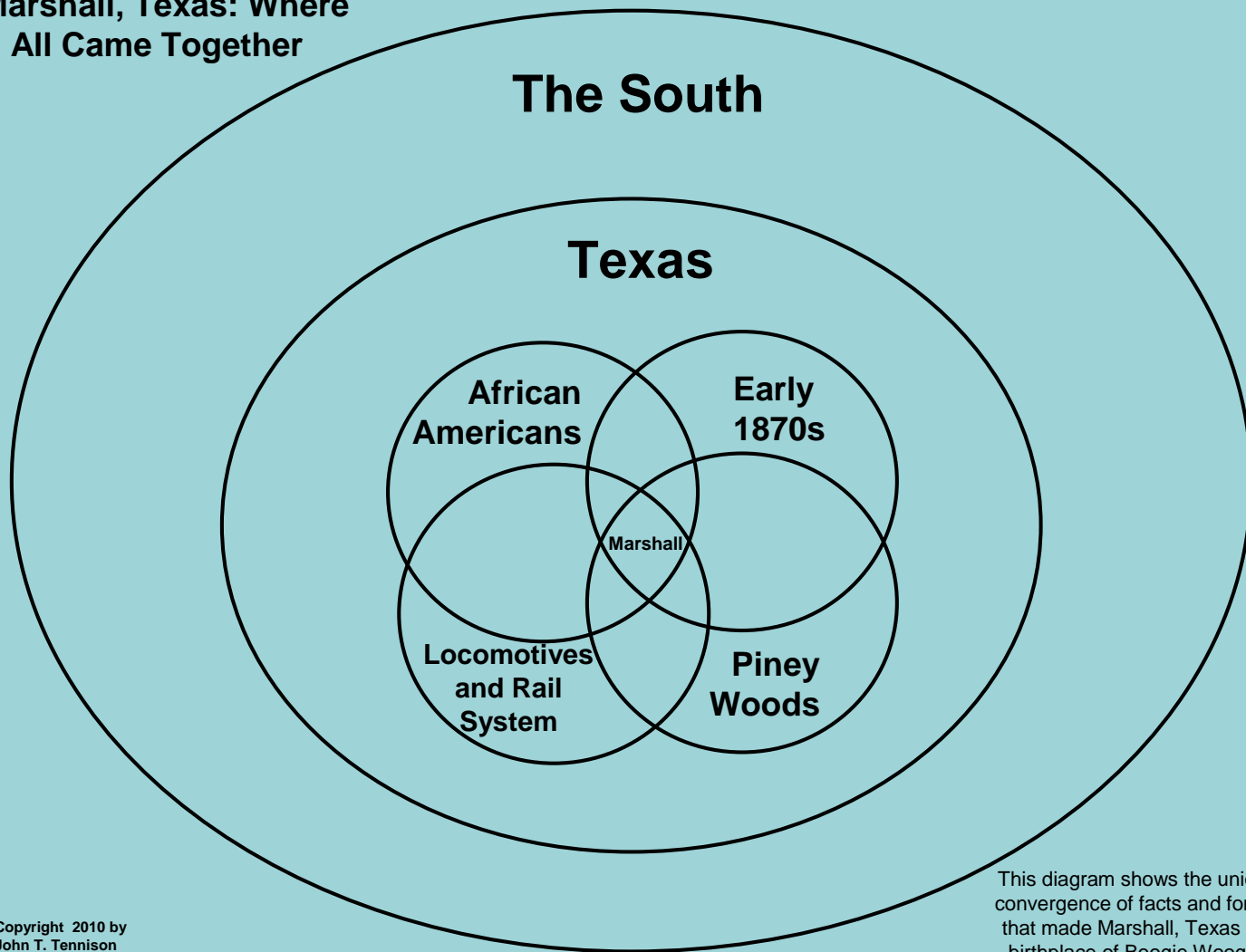


## Marshall, Texas: The Birthplace of Boogie Woogie



**In addition to the texts, interviews, oral histories, and research established over many years by the music historians and experts who preceded him, Dr. Tennison studied census data, forestry maps, and railroad & logging history in the Piney Woods to produce a list of locations where all the essential elements were present during the early 1870s...and was surprised to learn only one community combined them all.**

**Marshall, Texas: Where  
It All Came Together**



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John T. Tennison

This diagram shows the unique convergence of facts and forces that made Marshall, Texas the birthplace of Boogie Woogie.

**At the time the music emerged, all the essential elements associated with the earliest Boogie Woogie music were only prevalent in Marshall, Texas.**

# In the early 1870s, Marshall, Texas & Harrison County

- Had the largest population of newly emancipated African-Americans in Texas.
- Was the only railroad hub (the T&P) in the Piney Woods of northeast Texas.
- Was a center for logging to produce railroad crossties and lumber.



**Dr. Tennison's research also catalogued the names early Boogie Woogie players used to describe various bass line figures. Of these musical patterns, the "Marshall" is the most primitive, as would be expected if Marshall is the point of origination for Boogie Woogie music.**



## **BOOGIE WOOGIE BASSLINES**

- 1. The Marshall**
- 2. The Waskom**
- 3. The Greenwood**
- 4. The Shreveport**
- 5. The Jefferson**
- 6. The Hoxie**
- 7. The Texas & Pacific**
- 8. The Texarkana &  
Northern**
- 9. The Swamp Poodle**
- 10. The Black Diamond**
- 11. The Big Sandy**
- 12. The Tyler Tap**

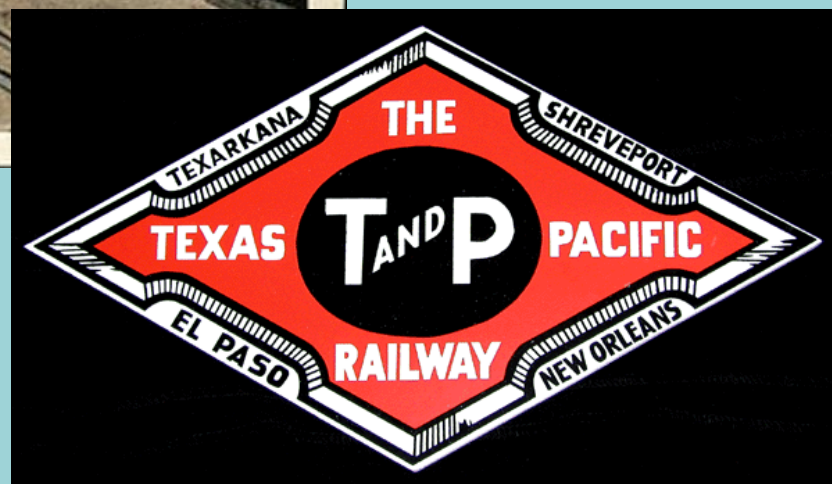


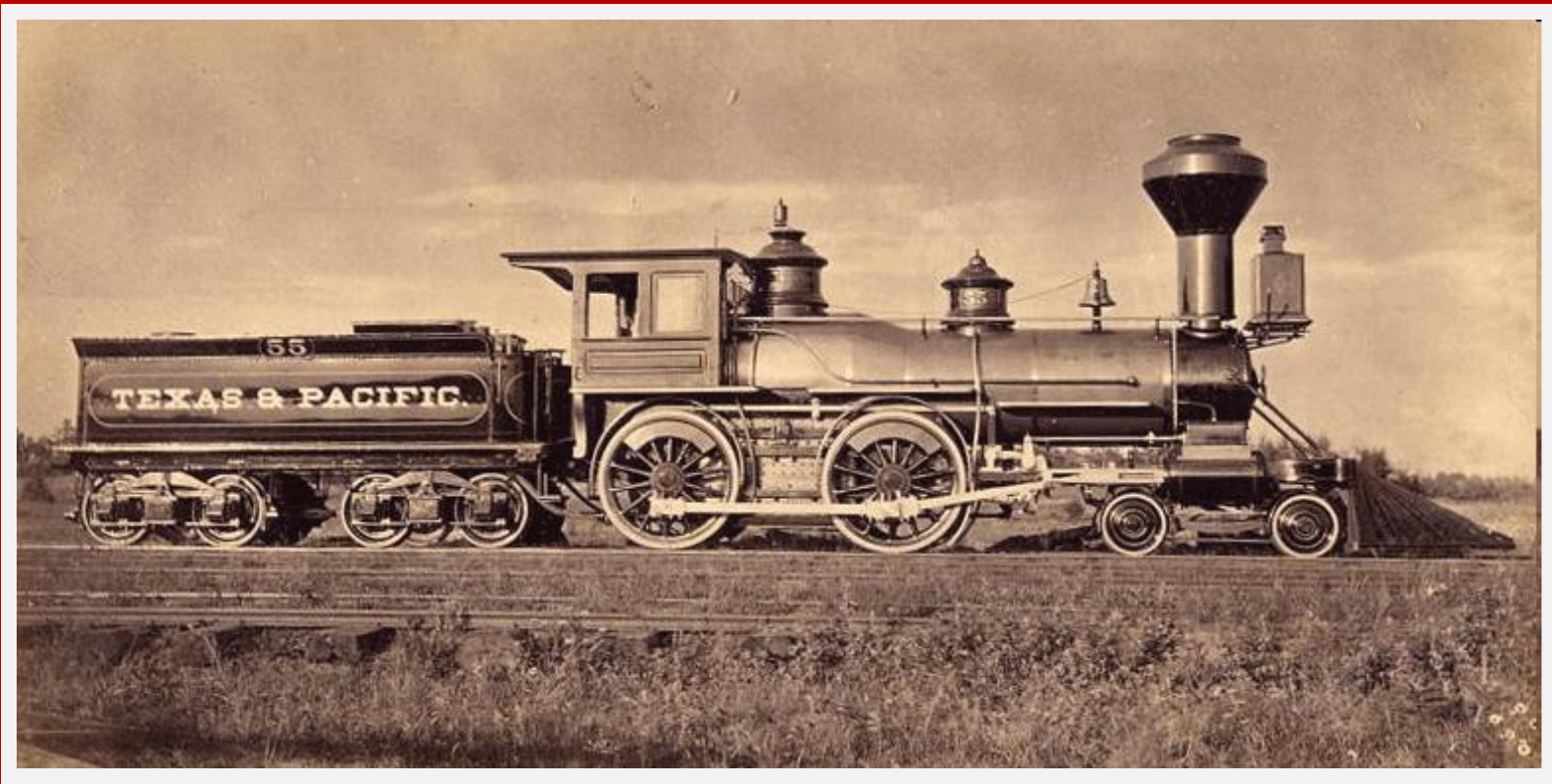
**Boogie Woogie music, and Marshall, Texas, have been linked to the Texas & Pacific Railroad from the beginning.**



**The first T&P line was 66 miles of pre-existing track from Waskom to Longview, with Marshall as the hub – purchased by T&P in 1872..**

**As the Headquarters of the T&P, Marshall was the hub of Boogie Woogie.**





**“In the case of Boogie Woogie, that repeating element was inspired by the chuffing sound of steam locomotives. Specifically, the 8-Beats-to-the-bar of classic Boogie Woogie is associated with 2 rotations of a steam engine driver wheel.”**

***John Tennison, M.D.***





**African-American crews  
built railroad tap lines into  
the forest to haul logs to the  
sawmills.**



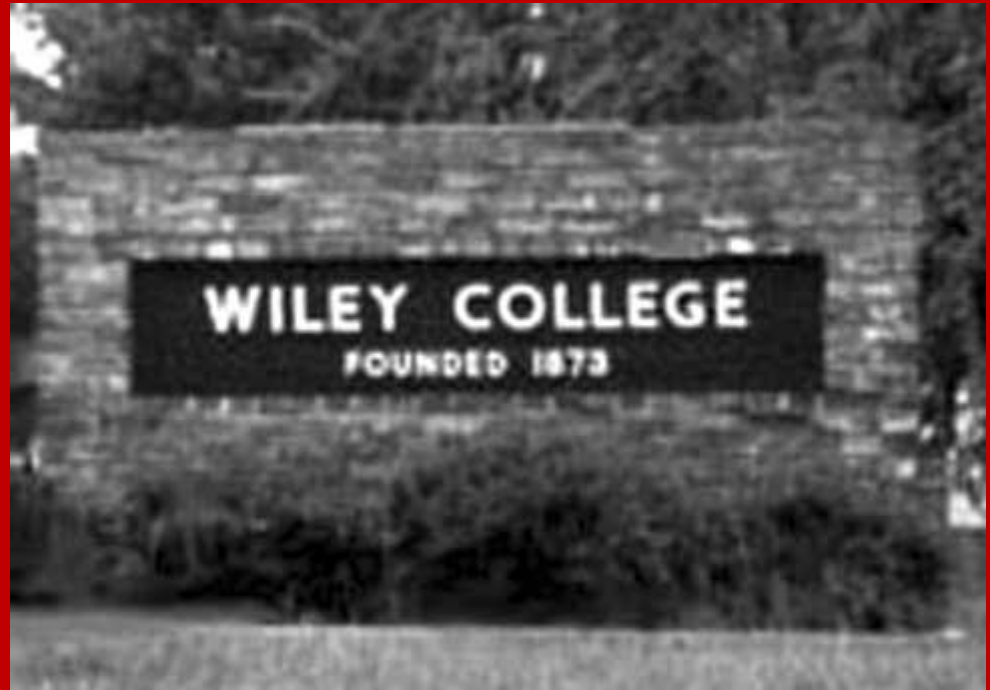


**The logging camp had a barrel house where workers could entertain themselves at night.**



African-Americans in Marshall were active in many important developments during the post Civil War years --

- The Freedman's Bureau opened Marshall's first school for African-Americans in 1866
- Wiley College was established here in 1873



- By 1867, The Bethesda Baptist Church & Ebenezer Methodist Church had been organized, and the Miles Memorial CME Church was established in 1872.
- And by 1873, the T&P Railroad shops were bustling.



Piano advertisements, often from a dealer as far away as New Jersey, were prominent in the Marshall daily newspapers of the 1870's.

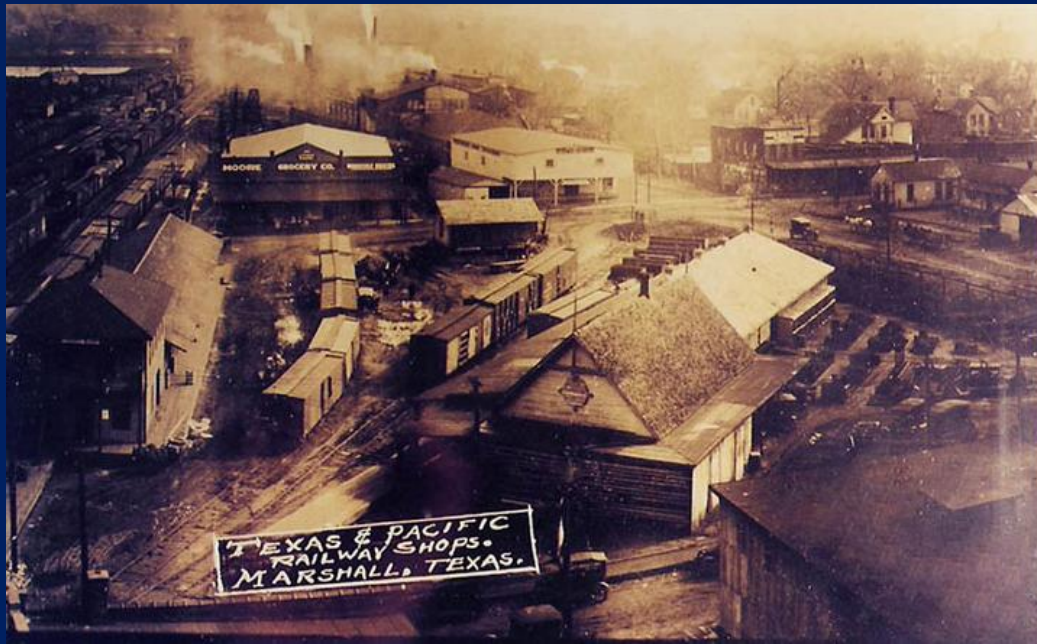
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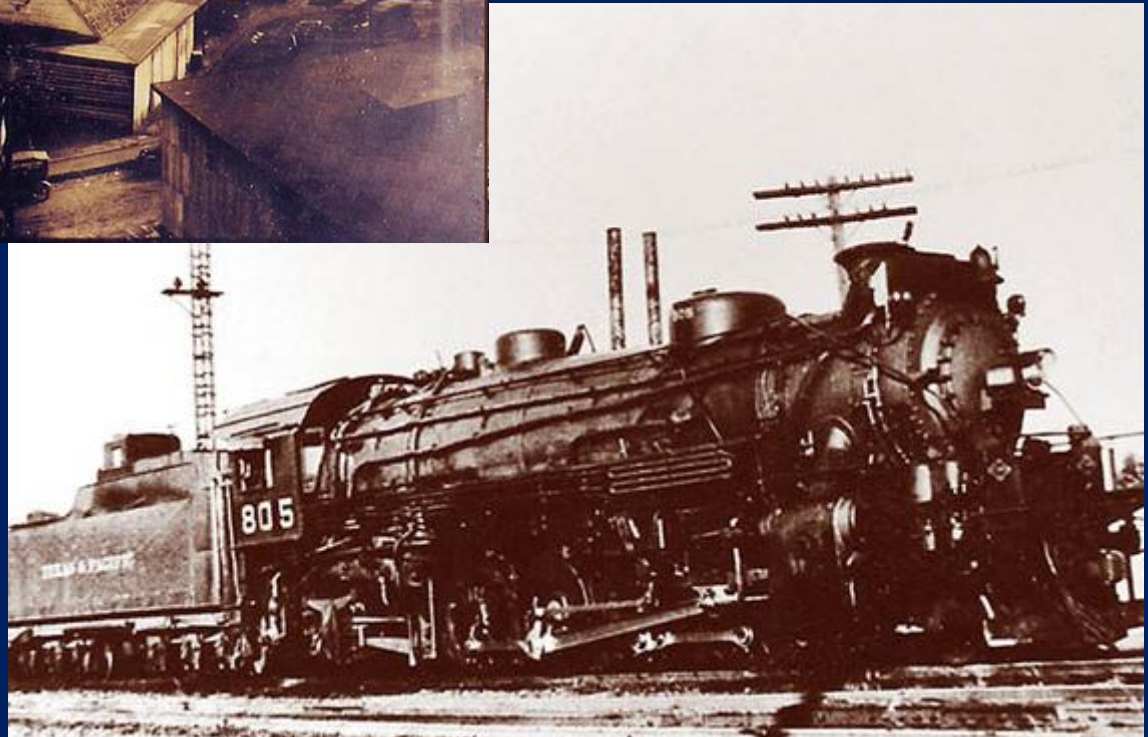
**Marshall, Texas is the most logical place where the merging of railroad and logging sounds with African musical sensibilities could have happened in the early 1870s. And as a railroad hub, Marshall provided a launching pad for Boogie Woogie to travel across the country.**





**The T & P Shops  
attracted laborers,  
and musicians, to  
Marshall...**

**T & P  
locomotives  
sped across the  
country in all  
directions,  
often with  
Boogie Woogie  
musicians  
aboard.**





The music travelled from its point of origination in Marshall on the T&P tracks.





# **Boogie Woogie Music exploded in all directions from Marshall via the T & P Railroad**



- **West to Longview, Dallas, & Fort Worth.**
- **East to Shreveport & New Orleans & St. Louis.**
- **South to Houston & Galveston.**
- **North to Texarkana & Chicago.**



**The music that was born in Marshall, Texas in the early 1870s spread to Kansas City, St. Louis and Chicago in the 20's, and on to New York and Los Angeles in the 30's and 40's.**

# Boogie Woogie Giants of the 1930's



Pete  
Johnson



Meade Lux Lewis

Albert  
Ammons

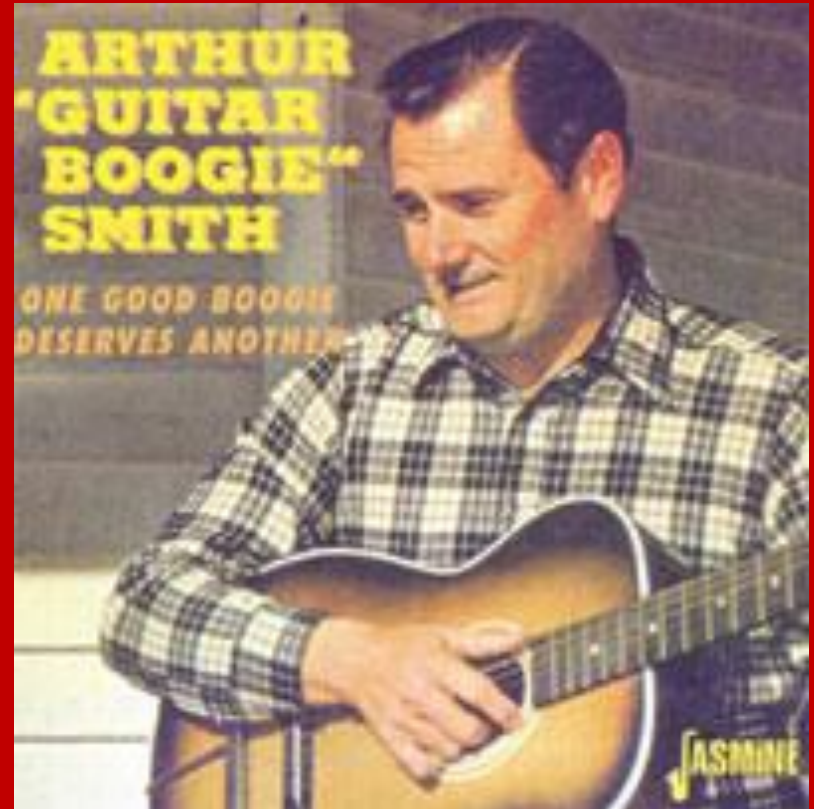


**The great Chicago pianists were influenced by Boogie Woogie pioneers, George and Hersal Thomas, who migrated to Chicago from Texas.**



# In the 1940's

**The Andrews Sisters sang  
Of a Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy**



**And the first Country single to  
sell more than a million copies  
was a guitar instrumental called  
“Guitar Boogie” by Arthur  
Smith.**

# Today, Boogie Woogie is loved all around the world.





# What is Boogie Woogie Music?

It's more than just fast piano playing...

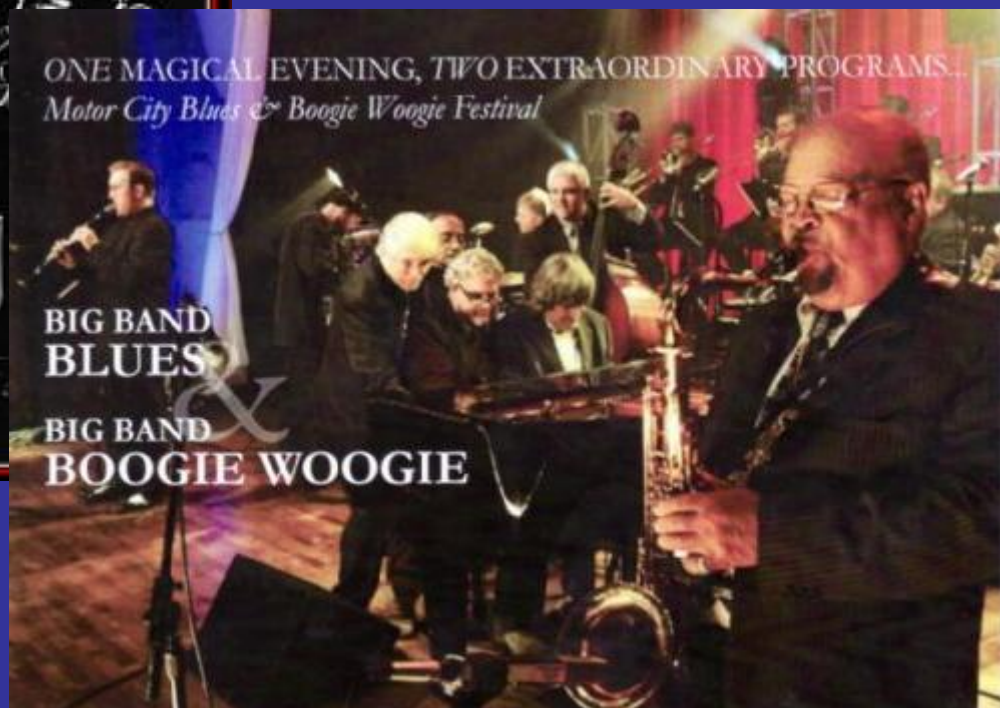


# **Dr. Tennison's 10 Elements of Boogie Woogie**

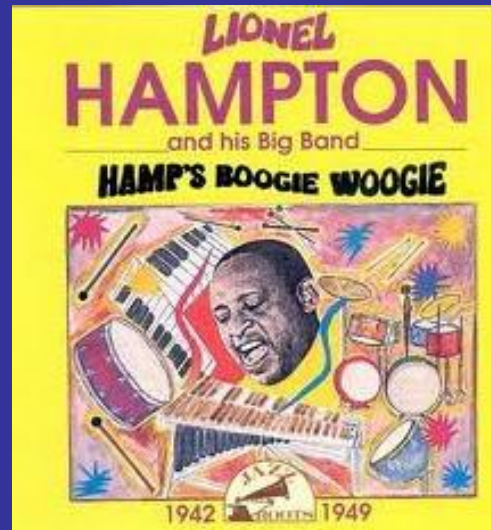
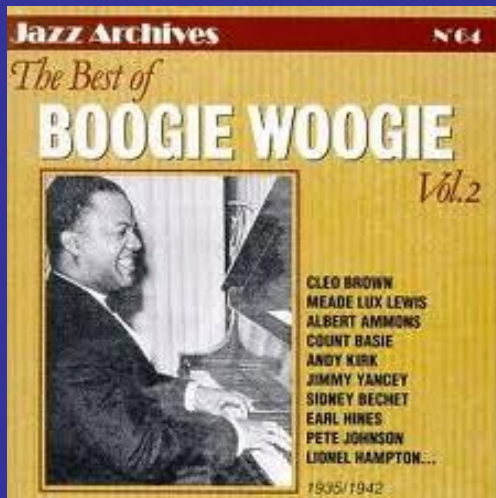
- **1. Ostinato** – a repeating musical element, usually occurring at least in the bass line.
- **2. Swing Pulse** – creates a certain feel, and allows for a greater degree of polyrhythmic interplay between the right and left hands of a skilled Boogie Woogie player.
- **3. Syncopation** – in either or both hands, is the process of placing musical events in locations that are not suggested by a pre-existing musical pulse or rhythm.
- **4. Polyrhythm** – results from an inter-play between right and left hand parts.
- **5. Counterpoint** – The Left-Hand Part is Frequently Melodic and Contrapuntal to the Right-Hand Part. This "independence of hands" between the right and left-hand parts of Boogie Woogie can give the effect that more than one person is playing at the same time.
- **6. Percussiveness** – A Highly Percussive, and Often Melodic, Right-Hand Part.
- **7. Tonality** – (a sense of musical key) will usually be present, even if an explicit melody is not identifiable.
- **8. Chord Usage** – Emphasis of I, IV, and V Chords. These are often in a 12-Bar, or so-called "12-Bar Blues" progression.
- **9. Tempo** – Boogie Woogie tends to use a certain range of tempos that are more sonically analogous with the mechanics of human bodily movement than other tempos, and thus more likely to elicit dancing.
- **10. Use of Specific Intervallic Sequences** – Certain intervallic sequences, especially bass figures, are identified so strongly with Boogie Woogie that, even when not played as ostinato, the presence of such sequences convey a sense of Boogie Woogie, and are universally recognizable throughout the world.



**Boogie Woogie can be played with any instrument, & in small groups, Big Bands, orchestras – you name it.**



Boogie Woogie can be Jazz, Blues,  
Swing, Country, Zydeco, and of  
course...



# Boogie Woogie is the Father of Rock and Roll.



**“ Call it what you may: jive, jazz, jump, swing, soul, rhythm, rock, or even punk, it’s still boogie so far as I’m connected with it.” -- Chuck Berry.**



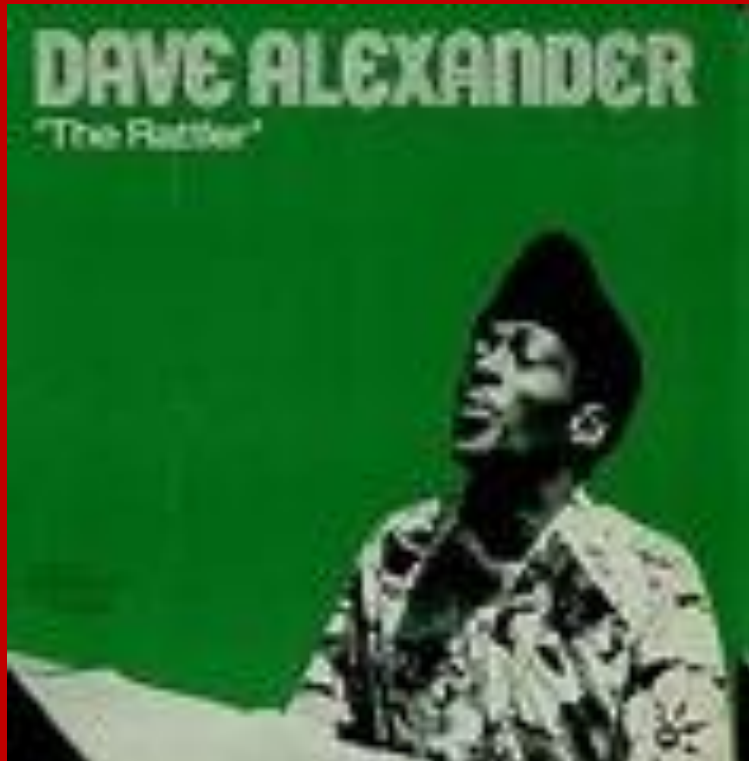
**“Everything I play is boogie woogie...rock and roll is just up-tempo boogie woogie!” – Little Richard**



**“They called it blues. They called it Boogie Woogie. Then they changed the name of it to Rock and Roll.” -- Jerry Lee Lewis**



**Boogie Woogie pianists Floyd Dixon and Omar Sharriff, formerly Dave Alexander Elam, grew up in Marshall.**



**And one of the most celebrated musicians of all time, Huddie “Leadbelly” Ledbetter, was born near the Louisiana/Texas state line at Caddo Lake.**

**One of the first to adapt Boogie Woogie bass lines to the guitar, Leadbelly said that he first heard Boogie Woogie “around Caddo” in 1899.**

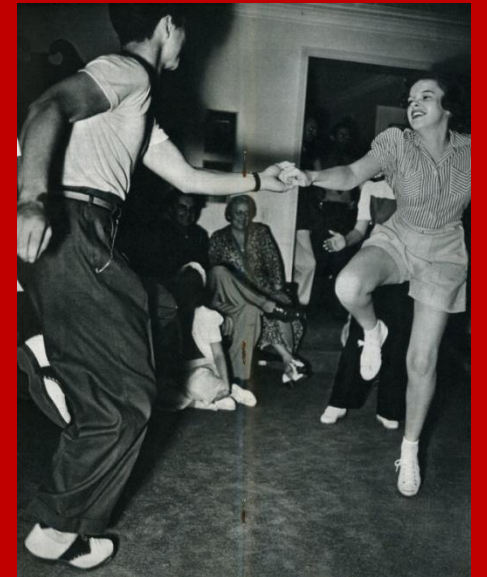




# DANCING

The exact origin of the term, Boogie Woogie is unknown, but several African languages have similar-sounding words, which mean: to beat like a drum, or - to dance.

The Lindy Hop, the Charleston, the Jitterbug, and other popular dances were all influenced by an African-American swing dance known as The Texas Tommy. Popular in New York and San Francisco in 1910, experts believe the Texas Tommy may have originated in Civil War era Northeast Texas.





**What does this rich and unique musical heritage mean to Marshall?**





**Becoming known as the  
Birthplace of Boogie  
Woogie means...**

**Community pride.**


**A unique, unforgettable identity  
as an interesting and entertaining  
place to live, work & play.**

**Strong appeal to visitors. And great  
music in our past, present and future.**




**Boogie Woogie can add new life to ongoing festivals and events...**

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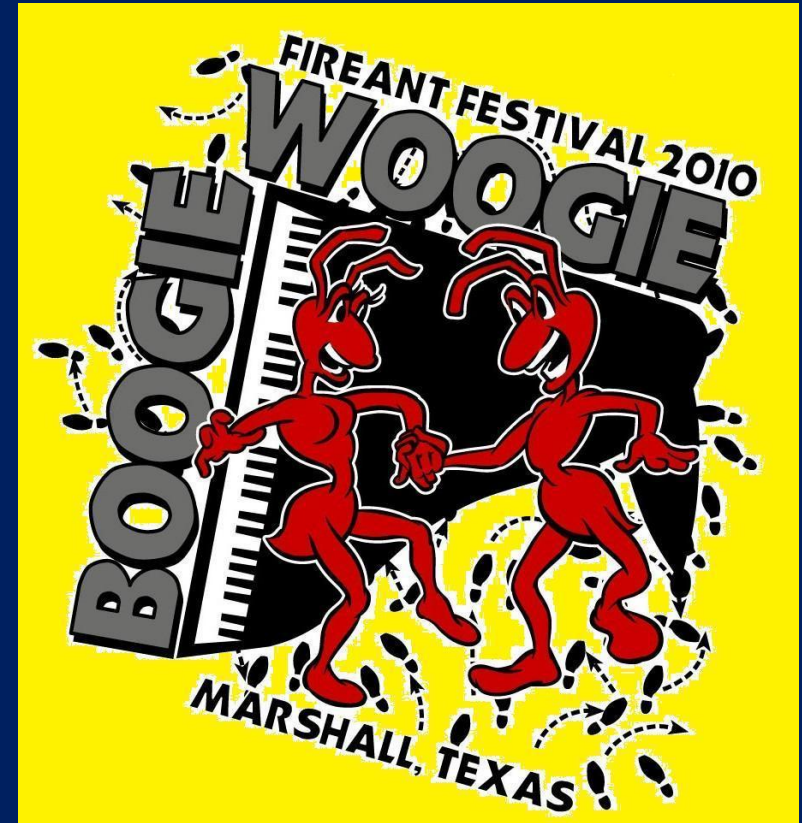
**BOB  
SEELEY**



**OMAR  
SHARRIFF**

**A Boogie Woogie  
Christmas Concert**  
Friday, Dec. 17th at 7:30 PM  
Marshall Visual Arts Center, 208 E. Burleson Street

TICKETS ON SALE SOON 903-938-8966  
Hotels, lodging and more at [www.visitmarshalltexas.org](http://www.visitmarshalltexas.org)



**...and is the perfect theme for new festivals and events. Why? Because everybody likes Boogie Woogie!**



**Marshall, Texas:**

**The Birthplace of**



**Boogie Woogie**

**Boogie Woogie is a very big umbrella for all musical performance. The term conveys a rich and authentic American roots music that has a world-wide following and covers many different styles of music.**

**If we celebrate this rich musical history by supporting live musical entertainment, we can build a magnet that will attract visitors from all directions, day in, day out.**

Marshall, Texas: The Birthplace of

# *Boogie Woogie*

**Born in Marshall. Loved around the world!**